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Tarkanian ad smacks Reid on immigration reform 'bailout' GOP hopefuls talking tough on issue as primary nears

By <u>LAURA MYERS</u> LAS VEGAS REVIEW-JOURNAL

Competing for the anti-illegal immigration vote, U.S. Senate candidate Danny Tarkanian on Monday revealed a new TV ad that smacks down U.S. Sen. Harry Reid's proposal for comprehensive immigration reform, calling it "nothing more than a bailout for those who break the rules."

Tarkanian proposed stopping all benefits for illegal immigrants as the Republican campaigned in Las Vegas and Reno with Jim Gilchrist, co-founder of the Minuteman Project, which has fought for tougher U.S. border security and sent armed supporters to confront people trying to sneak across.

"He is one of the few candidates who has taken a proactive stance against this illegal immigration crisis," said Gilchrist, who has endorsed Tarkanian's campaign.

Actually, Tarkanian, Las Vegas Assemblyman Chad Christensen and former Reno Assemblywoman Sharron Angle have all raised a sudden GOP outcry against illegal immigration in the last few weeks of the primary campaign with early voting starting May 22 and Election Day on June 8.

It's a popular conservative stance with about eight out of 10 Nevada Republicans opposed to offering illegal immigrants in the United States a path to citizenship, according to a mid-April poll commissioned by the Review-Journal. The Mason-Dixon Polling & Research survey also showed only two in 10 Democrats against the idea.

Talking tough on immigration also is a way for Tarkanian and other Republicans in the dozenstrong GOP primary field to try to catch GOP front-runner Sue Lowden, who has taken a more moderate stand, arguing for better enforcement of current laws and stronger border security.

"They're all feeling the need to be vocal and adamant and clear on this issue," said Kenneth Fernandez, a political science professor at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas. "If we were facing a general election rather than a June primary, I think the rhetoric would be toned down a bit."

Tarkanian, in contrast to Lowden, wants to cut social and health benefits for illegal immigrants, which cost Nevada an estimated \$700 million a year. Now, states provide education for children of illegal immigrants and emergency and some other health care, mostly because of U.S. Supreme Court decisions. But Tarkanian argues the state could pass a law that could meet a constitutional test.

"We need to eliminate all incentives to illegal immigrants, no more jobs and certainly no more taxpayer funded benefits," Tarkanian says in his new 30-second TV ad shot at Red Rock Canyon outside Las Vegas, a rough desert landscape that might resemble some border areas.

America remains "a land of opportunity" for immigrants, Tarkanian says in the ad, adding however that people must follow the rules and work hard to be eligible to apply for U.S. citizenship.

"Illegal immigration is hurting America and Harry Reid's amnesty plan is nothing more than a bailout for those who break the rules," Tarkanian says in the ad.

The Reid campaign rejected the "amnesty" label, saying the Democratic leader advocates illegal immigrants "paying back taxes, going to the end of the line and paying fines and penalties."

"Another day, another lie from Danny Tarkanian on immigration," Reid campaign spokesman Kelly Steele said. "Senator Reid continues to fight for comprehensive immigration reform that will secure our borders, crack down on employers who hire undocumented workers and bring the roughly 12 million people who are here undocumented out of the shadows.

"The fact that Danny Tarkanian continues to demagogue this serious issue with false claims about amnesty shows he'll do or say anything he thinks will help him get elected," Steele added.

Reid's immigration reform plan could appeal to Nevada's 25 percent Hispanic population, an important voting bloc, since it could provide an eventual path to U.S. citizenship.

"I'm going to move immigration as quickly a I can," Reid said Sunday on "Al Punto," on the Spanish language network Univision, although he acknowledged he might not get enough GOP support.

"Even people who are Hispanics who, identify as being Republican, are walking away from the Republicans" because of the immigration issue, Reid said. "This is an anti-immigrant party."

Contact reporter Laura Myers at Imyers@reviewjournal.com or 702-387-2919.

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Tarkanian ad smacks Reid on immigration reform 'bailout' May 11, 2010

Laura Myers

Las Vegas Review Journal

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Tatest News Neb. city votes to restrict illegal immigration

Josh Funk

Associated Press

This small Nebraske meetpacking town has joined Arizona at the center of a national debate about degal immigration after voters to illegal immigrants, but an expected court challenge could keep the measure from ever taking effect.

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NY Times Interactive Map

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General

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Reid walks immigration tightrope

June 21, 2010

Steve Tetreault

Las Vegas Review Journal

At a Las Vegas immigration rally in April, Sen. Harry Reid told a cheering audience the Senate would take up comprehensive reform this year. But now it is late June and prospects for meaningful reform are looking much less likely.

Moderate Democrats never were excited to tackle the politically tough issue, and Republicans are not about to play ball on legislation that can only make the Dems look good.

So now, Democrats "are starting to look at alternatives to address the thorny issue while appearing Hispanic voters," Politico reports in a story this morning.

"Republicans believe anything Reid does on immigration will be dictated more by his home-state politics and less about Senate reality," the paper reported.

If Reid tries to push immigration reform, "it would probably be very unpopular and would probably contribute to a larger Republican victory in November," Sen. Lamar Alexander, R-Tenn., told Politico.

Even if immigration reform is shelved this year, Sen. Robert Menendez, D-N.J., told the paper the issue can still be a winner for Reid given Republican challenger Sharron Angle's support for the Arizona immigration enforcement law.

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Activists rally forces for immigration reform

March 5, 2010

Lynnette Curtis

Las Vegas Review-Journal

Cynics might call it an exercise in futility, at least this year.

But count Michael Flores among the true believers: those convinced that with a lot of hard work, comprehensive immigration reform legislation could finally move forward in 2010, despite previous failures and the fact that Washington's attention is focused squarely on other issues.

"This is the time," said Flores, Southern Nevada director of Reform Immigration For America . "We're organized and we're not going to take no for an answer."

In November, Flores, 22, began leading the local arm of a national campaign to reform immigration laws in a way that will keep families together and provide a path to citizenship for the estimated 12 million illegal immigrants living in the United States.

His job includes lobbying congressional representatives and mobilizing the local Hispanic community and others concerned with getting immigration reform legislation passed. He's trying to get people as excited about the issue as they were in 2006 and 2007, when thousands participated in immigration reform marches in Las Vegas.

It's proven to be a difficult task.

Politicians have put the issue on the back burner in favor of such concerns as health care and the economy. Frustration among reform advocates came to a head after President Barack Obama's State of the Union address in January, during which he devoted a single sentence to immigration reform.

While advocates feel it is time politicians made good on their promises, getting others to remain energized has proven tricky, Flores said.

"People are a little hesitant. They don't want to get their hopes up again."

Joanna Nuñez, a University of Nevada, Las Vegas student and member of the United Coalition for Immigrant Rights, said a lot of people have lost hope. "They think it's not going to happen" this year, she said.

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Join our : Commensensible form belo participal Flores and Nuñez gathered last week with about a dozen other student and professional organizers and volunteers at the P of Nevada's downtown offices. The meeting of the "comprehensive immigration reform working group" was equal parts pep support group.

They shared the emotions people in the Hispanic community are experiencing concerning immigration reform: cynicism, fru

"What I'm hearing out there is people are very disillusioned," said Vicenta Montoya, a local immigration lawyer and commur realistic presentation of what is politically possible this year."

Whether or not it's realistic to expect reform in 2010, "the immigrant rights community doesn't want to let this go by without a part of RIFA's national campaign.

"The president made a commitment publicly when he ran for office to pass comprehensive immigration reform," she said. "I There are people in this room that can change history."

Locally, that fight includes planning events, staging rallies, sending out news releases and urging anyone who will listen to crepresentatives and demand they work on passing immigration reform this year. It means reaching out to churches, labor up and anyone else who could potentially help.

Flores helped organize an immigration rally in front of the Lloyd George U.S. Courthouse in January and a protest in front o coincided with Obama's recent visit. He's putting together another rally, scheduled for April 10, that he hopes will capitalize scheduled March 21 immigration reform march in Washington, D.C. Organizers hope to draw at least 100,000 people to the

Flores is taking some time off from his social work studies at UNLV to concentrate on the work.

"Our efforts are very strong," he said. "We've created a machine that cannot be ignored."

Lately, that machine has taken up most of Flores' time. He doesn't mind. He comes from a family of hard workers.

Flores' grandmother emigrated to the United States from Mexico as a teenager and "had to work her butt off to make it here restaurant worker and finally as the owner of her own restaurants, he said.

Flores was working as a busboy by the time he was 7 years old.

Now he wants to help make sure other immigrant families -- some of whom haven't been so lucky -- are able to stay togethe

"It's unbelievable how families are getting torn apart," he said. "This has got to be one of the solutions."

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